

care reform. Now we have to make up for a lost opportunity. And now seniors will bear the burden and pay the price for gridlock. Let us agree that the first rule of reform will be the same as it is in medicine: First, do no harm.

Let us agree to put partisan interests aside and put seniors first.

Let us agree that while good health care requires choice, managed care, when it is just managed profit, is wrong.

That prevention, home care, prescription medicine is quality health care for high quality lives.

Finally, let us pledge that we will not destroy Medicare in our effort to reform Medicare.

REPUBLICANS TACKLE FINANCIAL PROBLEMS, SEEK A BALANCED BUDGET

(Mr. CHABOT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, over the last 4 months the liberal Democrats in Congress have been feeding the public a steady diet of class warfare rhetoric. Somehow they think that the budget problems we face will magically disappear if the phrase tax cut for the rich is repeated over and over.

This strategy exposes the fact that liberal Democrats have a lack of conviction in solving the Nation's problems. They offer no leadership and they seek to divide America along class lines.

Since the start of the 104th Congress, Republicans have offered a vision of America that can solve its problems and we proved that we can keep our promises.

Republicans here in the House are convinced that we must balance the budget. But balancing the budget is not just about money it is about our children's future. For too long now, the Federal Government has operated in the red. The resulting debt is a threat to America's future generations that must be dealt with.

So while Democrats offer class division and dance around the tough issues, Republicans offer a return to a balanced budget.

REPUBLICANS CONSIDERING CUTTING MEDICARE

(Mr. HILLIARD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HILLIARD. Mr. Speaker, today the Republicans in Congress are considering proposals which will cut Medicare funding by billions of dollars, causing large reductions in Medicare services which will have a devastating effect on our senior citizens. We cannot allow this to occur. Our seniors are already on fixed incomes, with many of them having a tough time making ends meet from month to month. How can the Republicans in the light of day

even contemplate slashing our senior citizens at a time like this, when they deserve more and more health care?

Mr. President and Mr. Speaker, one of the speakers mentioned a minute ago that the President did not participate, that he is AWOL in the Medicare debate. I would like to say that the President is not AWOL, there is no need today to deal with the Medicare crisis. The Medicare crisis is only the political crisis that the Republicans have started this date.

USING COMMON SENSE TO FIX THE BUDGET

(Mr. JONES asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, if an average American were to pile up huge debts and engage in reckless financial behavior, that person would eventually be held accountable, either by the law or by his creditors.

But here in Washington, somehow, the reverse is true. The Federal Government has become immune to accountability. They have racked-up trillions in debt and yet continue their irresponsible spending. Unfortunately there is a price for all this irresponsibility. That price will be shouldered by average Americans who are not responsible for the failed policies of the past.

If we do nothing to remedy the out-of-control spending here in Washington, our children will suffer a very dim future. It does not take a rocket scientist to figure out that spending more than you earn is not the wisest thing—especially in the long run. And, it does not take a wizard to fix the budget. All it takes is commonsense, determination, honesty, and a realization that we simply cannot continue with the old Washington way of doing things.

REPUBLICAN DOUBLESPEAK ON MEDICARE CUTS

(Mr. McDERMOTT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to warn my colleagues to beware of Republican doublespeak on Medicare cuts.

The greatest doublespeak is that Republicans will reform Medicare to give seniors more choices by giving them vouchers to buy private insurance.

What they do not say is that the vouchers will not be worth enough to enable them to buy an insurance policy that gives them the choices they have today.

They do not say that the value of the vouchers will force seniors into the lowest cost and most restrictive HMO's.

They do not say that the value of the voucher is going to be ratcheted down every year to become worth less and

less until seniors are saddled with virtually all the costs of their health care.

They do not say that the vouchers will toss seniors to swim alone in the perilous and confusing currents of the private insurance market—the same market that has reduced their children's choices.

Vouchers are not more choice. They spell the end of Medicare coverage that seniors—and their families—rely on.

FIXING MEDICARE

(Mr. GOSS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GOSS. Mr. Speaker, it takes guts to do what is right instead of just doing what is popular. President Clinton's own Medicare Board of Trustees, which includes Cabinet Secretaries Donna Shalala, Robert Rubin, and Robert Reich, believe that under current law, Medicare will be bankrupt by the year 2002, or possibly even earlier. These are the President's people telling us. Doing nothing is disaster; doing nothing is a formula for bankruptcy. But what solutions have the Clinton Democrats proposed to correct this problem? None. I hear rhetoric today, but I do not hear solutions.

Mr. Speaker, the Clinton Democrats are showing a willingness to let the system collapse by maintaining the status quo. On the other hand, the Republican majority will rise to the challenge of trying to show some guts and offer some real solutions to preserve, to protect and to improve Medicare. The Republican majority is committed to honor our contract with older Americans. I know I am one, and I represent a lot of others.

Mr. Speaker, it is real simple. The program is going broke, and we are going to fix it because we care about senior citizens. We want them to have good quality, affordable health care options, and we know doing nothing is disaster, so we are going to do something.

HOW NOT TO CUT THE BUDGET

(Mr. BROWN of Ohio asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, first there was school lunches. Republicans voted to cut school lunches to pay for tax cuts for American's wealthiest citizens. Then Republicans proposed cuts in student loans to pay for tax cuts for the wealthiest special interests. Now Republicans want to cut Medicare services. They want to increase premiums, and copayments and deductibles.

Mr. Speaker, I am a deficit hawk. I want to balance the budget. But we cannot balance the budget, we should not balance the budget, by cutting taxes for the rich, by building star wars, and increasing military spending,